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Weekly Review

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General Pinochet delivers one-month anniversary speech.

CHILE: AN UNSPECTACULAR WEEK

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The junta government reaffirmed its commitment to a reshaping of Chilean institutions this week and moved ahead on several fronts. The regime appears to be pleased with its progress thus far, but remains wary of a counterattack from the left.

In a speech marking the government's first month in power, junta president Pinochet did not say when the nation might return to civilian rule. Noting that "to rebuild is slower and harder than to destroy," Pinochet declared that the armed forces' and carabineros' mission would be ended only when Chile achieved "the social peace necessary for true progress and economic development."

The outline of a new constitution designed to help achieve this social peace is taking shape.

The junta [REDACTED] has approved the ideas of a civilian drafting committee. They include provisions for run-off elections for the presidency and a formalization of the armed forces' role as guarantor of the constitution. Perhaps the most significant aspect just now is that the new constitution [REDACTED] will take over a year to write.

A [REDACTED] plan to place the carabineros under the Ministry of Defense instead of Interior may run into opposition from police officers concerned about preserving their independence and prerogatives. Unity is still the watchword Of the armed forces and carabineros, but decisions on matters like this and on specific means to reach vaguely defined goals provide the ingredients for friction within the government as well as between it and its civilian supporters.

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The junta, meanwhile, has banned all parties of the Popular Unity coalition. The Communists, the Socialists, and the smaller United Popular Action Movement had already been outlawed in practice. The published decree formalized this and added the Christian Left, the Radicals, and the Independent Popular Action.

On the other hand, the junta's relationship with the Christian Democratic Party apparently warmed somewhat in a face-to-face meeting between the generals and party leaders. The junta seems to have been receptive to the party's argument that prolonging the suspension of overt political action would ultimately benefit the Communists and other leftists, who are more skilled in organizing clandestinely.

Military and police search parties now appear to be turning up fewer and smaller arms caches, but this does not necessarily indicate that most illegal weapons have been recovered. On the contrary, opposition groups probably retain access to significant quantities of arms.

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An effort to unite the left in a single anti-government organization may be under way. Formation of such a group in anything more than name must await the revival of its potential components, however, and this process is complicated by the absence of key leaders and the government's ability to keep the left off balance. The left probably is getting some help from sympathetic groups abroad, particularly in Peru and Argentina, but significant aid for an insurgency hinges on the ability of Chileans to start one themselves. The armed forces [REDACTED] are in the process of ridding their own ranks of anyone suspected of cooperating with or harboring sympathies toward the Allende government. [REDACTED]

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